

For The Very Best In Building

TURNER BUILDING SUPPLY

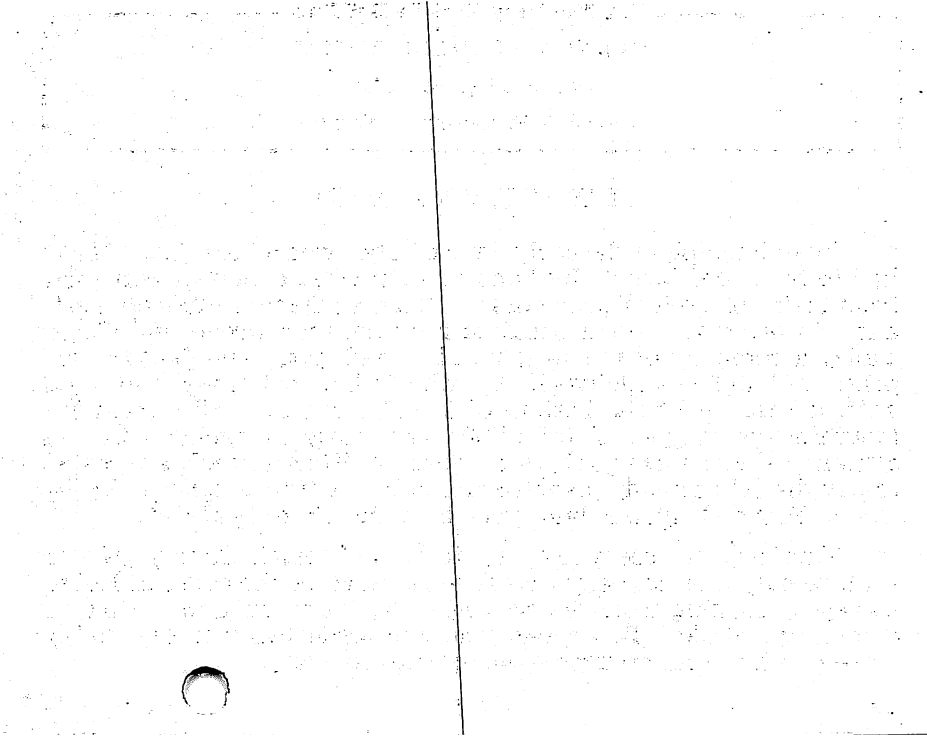
That good place to buy

Heber — Roosevelt — Vernal

THE OLD TOLL GATE

Road building in the early days of Utah was a hard job. Rocks had to be moved largely by hand or with what help they could get from teams of oxen or poor horses. Road equipment was non-existent. In order to have a passable road between Provo and Heber Valley a company of men organized a road group and paid the expenses of building a highway. In order to be repaid they built a toll gate, locating it at the bottom of a hill about two miles from the mouth of the canyon. A toll of 50c was charged travelers who had a team; a single horse got by for a quarter. Thus a fund was created to pay the debt already involved and to insure future upkeep. Spring Dell in Provo Canyon is built very near the old toll gate site.

This may not seem to many to be a Wasatch County pioneer venture but none can deny that it helped further the cause of Heber Valley by making it more accessible. To those builders we owe a debt of gratitude. To anyone who has made living in our valley more pleasant and profitable we extend thanks.

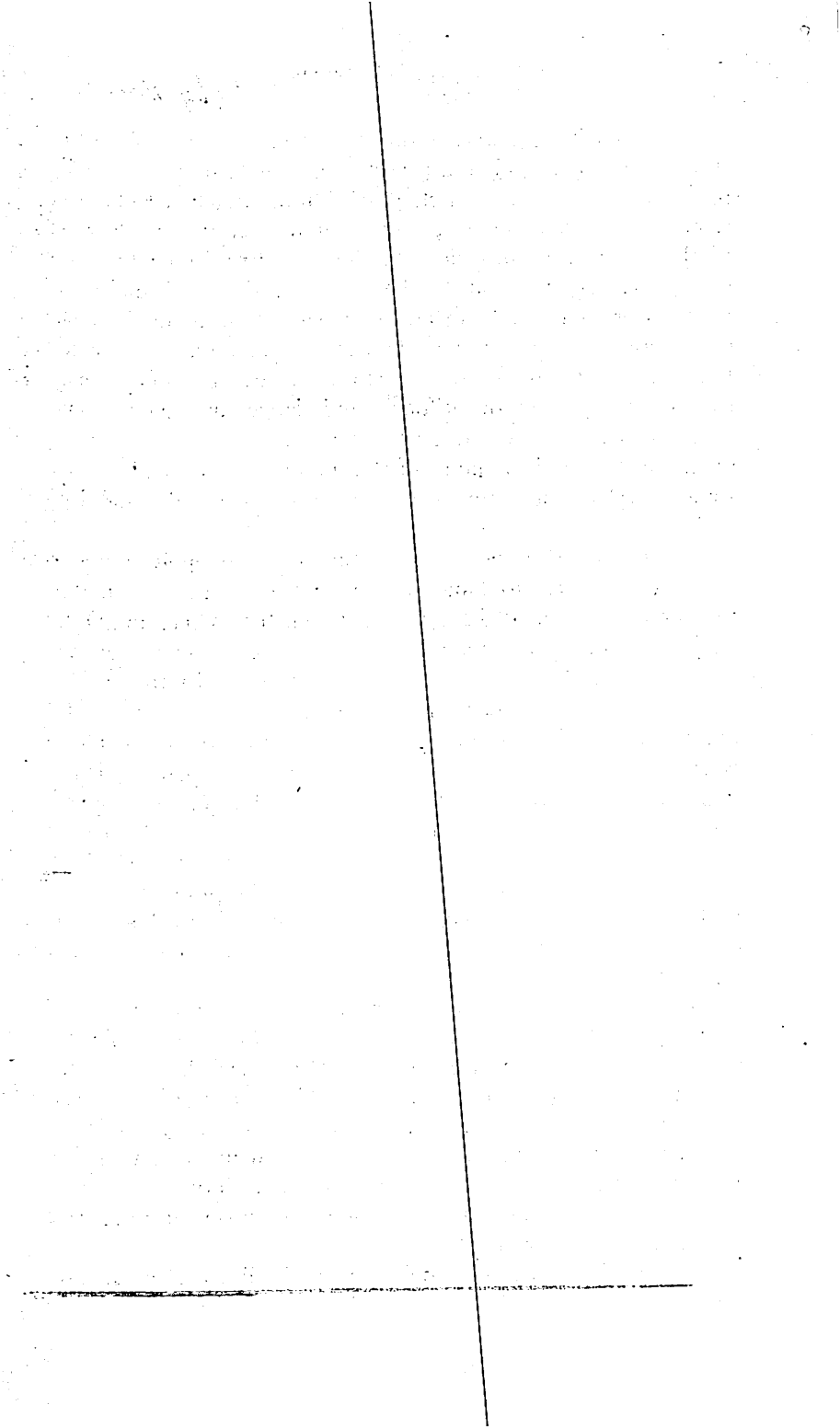


route. Such bridges were authorized across the East Weber and Bear rivers, the Malad, and the Jordan, while a ferry was provided for Ham's Fork. An important stipulation attached to the more remunerative concessions was the requirement that ten per cent of all the proceeds be paid into the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company. Both to satisfy the wants of the local traders and travelers of southern Utah and to meet the needs of the transit emigration the Legislature, on Jan. 13, 1853, appropriated the relatively large sum of \$2,000 to defray the expense of erecting a suitable bridge over the difficult and dangerous Sevier crossing. Another clause of the same act set aside \$1,500 for the grading of the road around the point of the mountain, the highly troublesome elevated and sandy barrier between Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Most interesting of all was the five year monopoly concession of March 2, 1852, to James Brown, entitling him to toll every teamster \$3.00 that used the road between the Weber and Ogden rivers, livestock proportionately, and footmen twenty-five cents. The citizens of Ogden were privileged to use the city thoroughfare and the adjacent bridges for a year on payment of the price of the one passage to the traveling public. This exaction was doubtless considered the equivalent for the customary local poll tax, but its unpopularity and the fact that the charter of Ogden City gave it exclusive jurisdiction over its streets, led to its repeal. In lieu thereof Brown in 1855 was granted the privilege of erecting toll bridges across the Weber and Ogden rivers, the property to revert to the Territory in five years. Orson Hyde and the two Reese brothers were granted similar privileges over Carson River by the same legislature.

General provision for a road tax and road supervisors was made in the act of March 6, 1852, wherein every able-bodied male over eighteen was required to pay a poll tax of one day's labor upon the roads and highways. Ten hours of good and faithful labor might be commuted to \$1.50 cash payment, if the citizen preferred. Another source of revenue had been provided in the law of Feb. 4, 1852, which gave the counties permission to levy not in excess of five mills for road purposes. Cities by a law of 1853 were empowered to levy a street tax.

The Weber Canyon Road Company, the Provo Canyon Road



Company, and the Big Canyon (Parley's Canyon) Road Company were incorporated Jan. 19, 1855, as toll roads for twenty years, subject to legislative revision. The Weber Company was to build a good wagon road from the mouth of the Weber to the place where the overland emigration road crossed said river. The Provo Company was to open a highway from Provo to Kamas Prairie, and thence to the main traveled road near Black's Fork in Green River County. The Big Canyon Company was to build to Kamas Prairie. These three arterial mains were to connect the population centers of Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake with the transcontinental highway, thereby facilitating travel and lessening the costs of transportation.

Thus ferry, bridge, road, and canyon projects were very much to the fore in the mind of the public and the legislators during the initial decade of settlement. Realizing their inability to finance a well-constructed highway the full length of their settlements, the legislature and governor united in memorializing Congress, Jan. 21, 1853, to locate and work a military road "from Fort Hall in Oregon Territory via Fillmore City and Harmony, in Utah Territory, to the mouth of the Rio Virgin, to facilitate the transportation of Troops and Military Stores, whenever the same may be necessary for the protection of the settlers, and to preserve peace among the hostile tribes, and protect the emigrants from Indian aggression; as without such a road, the necessary protection cannot be rendered." The suggested amount necessary for bridging the streams and constructing the road was \$50,000. Presumably the Utah people regarded Fort Hall as the chosen intermountain military center from which key point troops might radiate.

Chandless, the English traveler, depicted the state and condition of the local roads in 1855-1856 in this wise:

"The people are alive to the need of better communication, but with so much else to do little of this has been yet done. Across the rivers and larger streams substantial wooden bridges have been constructed: undoubtedly the first requisite; but proper roads are wanted in place of the present mere tracks. Those in the richest and most settled parts of the valley become, in wet weather or thaws, downright sloughs of mire; wasting hours, and wearing out the team with a double draught; and in the frost, if not impassable, very dangerous for traveling over beyond a foot's pace.